

APPENDIX A: ANNUAL LETTER TO PARENTS/GUARDIANS

Dear Parents/Guardians,

At the American Cooperative School of Tunis (ACST), we desire that our children and youth have the best available educational experience that is free from any type of bullying, neglect, or abuse of any kind. In this regard, and in keeping with ACST core values and mission statement, The Board has adopted a **Child and Youth Protection Policy** to guide our staff and families in matters related to the health, safety, and care of children in attendance at our school. This policy is so important to ACST, as your Superintendent, I am required to notify parents and other community members at the beginning of each school year, or as necessary, reminding them about this truly critical issue.

The ACST's Child and Youth Protection Policy is based on international law and on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in which Tunisia is also a signatory.² In particular, the two key articles which address protection to children are:

Article 19 – Protection from abuse and neglect

The State shall protect the child from all forms of maltreatment by parents or others responsible for the care of the child and establish appropriate social programs for the prevention of abuse and the treatment of victims.

Article 34 – Sexual exploitation

The State shall protect children from sexual exploitation and abuse, including prostitution and involvement in pornography.

As a result of the enrollment of a student at ACST, our parents, as well as other community members who have contact with our students, agree to work in partnership with the school and abide by the policies adopted by the ACST Board of Governors. All of us at ACST want you to know that we genuinely value our partnership with you in providing for the safety and care of our students. It is for this reason that ACST has endorsed a Child and Youth Protection Policy that **defines the standards** by which all ACST students should be treated with respect and dignity at all times.

Educational Components of ACST Child and Youth Protection Policy

As part of our overall educational programs and specific to our shared responsibility to educate children, to protect them, and to learn and grow in a safe environment, ACST will:

- 1) Provide age appropriate lessons for all grade levels to help students understand personal safety, needs and rights.
- 2) Provide parent materials and information sessions to help parents better understand our programs and policy.
- 3) Annually train faculty to recognize and report issues of abuse and neglect.

We will work together with parents at home and other community members to ensure that our children are safe and are knowledgeable about their rights and responsibilities to themselves and to each other so that they can grow and learn free of fear in a safe and supportive environment. I thank you for your support of our efforts and invite you to contact the school counselor or principal regarding any specific questions you may have.

In Partnership,

Dr. Zak Palsha
Superintendent

² Child Protection in Tunisia (1995).